

10 MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
BEFOKMEB,

(1831-1832) great confusion prevailed in the Algerian army of occupation. Commanders and officers were constantly being changed, and Zola himself, after serving at first as a company officer, was temporarily entrusted with wardrobe matters, in his management of which some irregularities appear to have arisen, in consequence, perhaps, of the aforesaid confusion, or of Zola's inexperience of such duties, or even neglect of them. In this connection, it is asserted that he became involved in an intrigue with a married woman, the wife of an ex-non-commissioned officer, of German origin, named Fischer. It is alleged that in May, 1832, when this woman and her husband were on the point of sailing for France, Zola disappeared from his quarters ; and that, some garments belonging to him having been found on the sea-shore near Algiers, it was at first thought he had committed suicide, or had been drowned while bathing. Somebody suggested, however, that he might be with the Fischers, and accordingly the vessel on which they had taken passage was searched. Zola was not there, but the Fischers acknowledged that a sum of fifteen hundred francs, out of four thousand found in their possession, belonged to him. This seemed a matter for investigation, particularly as a deficit in the wardrobe accounts had now been

discovered. The
Fischers, therefore, were arrested and brought
on shore.

But Zola, from some unknown retreat, —
unknown, that
is, at the present time, — wrote to the
Commander-in-CHief,
General the Duke of Kovigo, offering to come
forward, make
up his accounts, and pay whatever deficit might
be found.
According to the Duke of Kovigo, as Zola was
only sus-
pected of bad management, and no judicial
complaint had
been laid against him, this offer was accepted.
]To court-